Met Office

NEWS

'Weather Kids' communicate future climate challenges

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A United Nations global campaign launched today sees children calling for pledges to help prevent the worst impacts of climate change.

Thousands of parents and carers across the world are making pledges on behalf of their children today about how they are going to help tackle climate change, improving future outcomes for their children. It's all part of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 'Weather Kids' global campaign which the Met Office has been supporting.

A key part of the global campaign is a number of hypothetical future forecast videos presented from children across the world where they act as a meteorologist. The 'Weather Kids' read a plausible global forecast for 2050, when they'll be adults.

In addition to simply describing the weather, the 'Weather Kids' talk about how the extreme weather in the forecast could impact their everyday daily lives, whilst the forecast shows images of heatwaves, fires and floods. The Met Office has worked with the UNDP to create a UK version of the video which sees Jack, 9, take on the role of weather forecaster.

The campaign launches ahead of World Meteorological Day on Saturday and follows this week's WMO State of the Global Climate report, which highlighted how through 2023 records were once again broken, and in some cases smashed, for greenhouse gas levels, surface temperatures, ocean heat and acidification, sea level rise, Antarctic sea ice cover and glacier retreat.

Inspiring people for a better future

During the report, Jack states that: "long heatwaves will affect 98% of children in the UK. All this heat could stop us from playing outside for ages.

"If we don't listen to scientists, things are going to be even crazier when I grow up. Extreme droughts will wipe out wheat crops, killing the one food my brother eats, Weetabix."

Jack ends his weather report with a powerful plea from the children: "It's not just a weather report to us. It is our future".

On taking part in the campaign, Jack said: "I wanted to inspire other people to show them it doesn't matter how old you are, anyone can have an impact on climate change."

The idea behind the campaign is to raise awareness of the impacts of climate change and improve outcomes for the children of today and future generations. This ties in with the theme of this year's World Meteorological Day, which is 'At the Frontline of Climate Action'. The campaign will challenge parents and carers to pledge to take climate action on behalf of their children.

Preventing the worst impacts of climate change

Prof Lizzie Kendon is a Climate Scientist at the Met Office. She said: "The climate my children will experience will be very different to the climate I experienced as a child. The science is clear, our climate is changing, with impacts around the globe due to human influence. Climate change is not just something that is distant from us or something in the future, with the observational record showing changes already here in the UK. The Weather Kids theoretical 2050 forecast is a reminder of how things could look for future generations. The worst impacts however are not inevitable – we can prevent them and improve outcomes for the next generation. The next few years are critical."

Met Office Presenter and Meteorologist, Aidan McGivern, who features in the Met Office version of the video, said: "I have been involved in this project from the start and although its format is light-hearted, it is a vehicle for a very serious message. We need to increase awareness of the impacts of climate change and take meaningful action now to create a better tomorrow for future generations."

The UNPD worked with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on the campaign, and the 2050 weather forecast is based on climate projections and data from UNDP, WMO, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and UNDP's Climate Horizons data platform.

Parents are being urged to sign a pledge to take climate action now at the UNDP website www.WeatherKids.org. You can read more about the campaign and ideas for pledges on our Weather Kids webpage.

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